

THE
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

NEW SERIES.

WM. B. FOWLE, EDITOR.

VOL. XII.

BOSTON, JANUARY 15, 1850.

NO. 2.

OUR SUCCESSORS.

EVERY man lives as much for his posterity as for himself, and it is his duty to see in what way he can best subserve the real interests of both parties. That a man should provide for his offspring, no one, we think, will seriously deny, for even the lower animals do this by an impulse which unquestionably proceeds from the Creator; but this instinct provides only for the animal nature, and it is to be regretted that the parental care of the rational animal too often reaches no farther. It is too much the case that parents consider the sum of their duty to themselves to consist in the accumulation of wealth, and that to their children in the due transmission of it, when it can be no longer retained. The attempt to secure the accumulation of property by entail, and to prevent its dissipation by heirs, seems to be an attempt to counteract the order of providence, and ere long will probably be abandoned. In this country, it is effectually prevented by the laws, and every attempt to prevent the distribution, and final dissipation of hereditary wealth has signally failed; the very expectancy of wealth preventing those attentions to character, and inducing those habits of body and mind, which almost necessarily lead to its alienation.

It is clear, then, that wealth is not the best legacy we can leave to our children, since it often absorbs the attention, and narrows the mind of him who accumulates, and unfits the child for high moral and intellectual action. Men of wealth, it must be allowed, generally give their children the best education that money can procure, but the result, to which we have alluded, would seem to prove that bad is the best, and quite insufficient to fortify the child against the dangers and

evils, that beset every expectant of wealth, who has had no hand in its acquisition. It seems to be evident, therefore, that the best inheritance is a good education, and a good education is something very different from what generally goes by the name. The great end of instruction has long been overlooked in the preparation of the young mind for the acquisition of property, and for the due enactment of some part in the masquerade of life, where form is put for fact, and seeming for truth. In the Eleventh Annual Report of the late Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, it was asserted, and proved, by the testimony of many competent witnesses, that, if our schools did all that we have a right to expect from them, every child in the Commonwealth would receive such an education as would fit him, not only for all the duties of life, social, civil, moral, but would make him a hopeful expectant of that blessed life, which begins not until time has ceased to be. The whole argument of the Report fully proves that, so far, our school system has done little, very little, compared even with the labor and the outlay; and nothing, compared with the requirements of that standard which the Report sets up, and clearly shows to be attainable.

If it is possible so to educate a new generation that every individual shall be fitted to live and die a Christian, fulfilling all his duties to God and man, as well as improving and refining his own mind and heart, there can be no doubt that the education now furnished to our children has not begun to do the work. So far from any certain progress is even this community, that it is questionable whether crime and vice, licentiousness and irreligion are not on the increase amongst us. It is a common remark that an honest man can not get a living, and character has long ceased to be good security for the banks and moneyed men. We recollect several years ago to have heard a sermon from the elder Dr. Beecher, the whole object of which was to prove the possibility of the salvation of every person in his large congregation. If this was possible in that congregation, why not in every other? The fact is, men have never set about this matter in earnest. In our pecuniary appropriations, we have paid more regard to custom than to duty; we have measured our actions by the standards below us, and not by the only standard set up by our Saviour, who said, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect," and again, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." We are told that the very idea of being perfect, as God is, is absurd, because the thing is impossible; and the rich men of our times consider the treasures in heaven rather as fancy stock, than as real property,

that can neither be lost by holders, nor wasted by heirs. Still the words of Jesus had a meaning, and, as sure as he has revealed a future state, he has made its rewards to depend upon conduct here.

What shall be done then? It is the duty of governments and of individuals to promote the welfare of every human being to the extent of their means; and all men may be made better and happier, as well in the very next generation as in that of which poets sang some thousand years ago, and which prophets have promised some thousand years to come. So little progress has been made in educating the world, that most men consider vice, and crime, and sin, as ineradicable evils, which must exist in about the present proportion, the object of all effort being to keep down rather than to remove them. We are not sanguine in our expectations, but we are certain that the problem of man's improvement up to the standard of reason, to say nothing of his perfectibility, can never be solved by the measures now pursued. We shall endeavor to point out the inadequateness of the present measures, and, in doing this, we hope to obtain a glimpse, at least, of that better system by which the world, beginning, we trust, at Massachusetts, is to be regenerated.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. NO. II.

In volume third of this Journal, at the 180th page, an esteemed correspondent commenced a series of essays on the early English Grammarians, but relinquished his interesting notices, just as he reached our times, in consequence of failing health, which seems to be the only certain reward of the faithful teacher. He noticed *Wm. Lilly*, who, in fact, was only a Latin grammarian, and ruled in the classical schools of England two centuries and a half. *Ben Jonson* the poet came next, in 1640, but he did not attempt an English Grammar, his object being, as his title page declares, "the benefit of all strangers," and this benefit he endeavors to confer by bending the English to the Latin forms. He introduced the *Article*, and gave two declensions to nouns, and four conjugations to verbs. But the work hardly deserves the name of an *English* grammar, so little of it relates to etymology and syntax, and so entirely is it "done into Latin." In 1653, *John Wallis*, the greatest mathematician, and, probably, the best linguist of England, prepared a grammar, not to show how English could be warped into Latin and Greek, but to show the learned of Europe in what respects English differed from the classical languages. This led him

to make a truly *English* grammar, and the consequence is that he has no Articles, no Cases, no Modes, only two Tenses, and no Participles. He does not, as some have supposed, dismiss any form of speech from our language, but he classes the words differently, and shows how we effect, in our way, all that the Latins and Greeks effected by their varied terminations. This grammar was written in Latin, for the learned, and was never intended for schools; but it was the basis of all English Grammars for more than a century.

John Brightland, 1710, comes next, and he follows almost exactly in the track of Dr. Wallis; indeed it seems as if he only intended to give to Wallis's grammar a popular English form. He allows no cases, no gender to English nouns; and articles and participles are adjectives. He has no modes, only two tenses, the present and past, and he calls all the auxiliaries principal verbs. Steele, in the *Tatler*, highly commends this grammar, and it was probably studied by his compeers, Addison, Swift, Johnson, Junius, &c. The next Grammar noticed is the *Hermes* of Harris, which is a general grammar, and not an English one. Harris clearly shows, however, in his remarks on mode and tense, that, if we allow English to have any, it will be difficult to say where we must stop. Variations of termination we can easily determine, but the varieties of phraseology no one can limit. The *Hermes* was never intended for schools, and is not to be classed with *English* grammars. In 1753, A. Fisher published a grammar, which was used even down to the time of Lindley Murray. He allows no case except the Possessive, has no modes, and but three tenses, the *Future* being now first introduced.

In 1762, *The British Grammar* appeared. The name of the author is, we believe, unknown, but the work must have had some celebrity, for it passed through several editions, and was, probably, the first English grammar reprinted on this side of the Atlantic. This work departed, more than any other had done, from the true structure of our language. The article and adjective are not allowed to be parts of speech, but are treated of, under the noun, in such a manner, however, as to give them a full title to the rank that was denied them. The only *case* admitted is the *genitive* or *possessive*, because this only is formed by a change in the termination of the noun. The nominative and objective cases are called "the foregoing and following *states*" of the noun. The author considers *gender* to be a variation of the termination to mark the sex; and, therefore, he denies any gender to English nouns, which use different words, or add adjectives. He describes a verb as Murray does, and has two *voices*. He has four *modes*, the Indicative being the same as Murray's, except-

ing the second future of the latter, which is described, however, in a note. The Imperative is the same. The Subjunctive of the British Grammar is Murray's Potential, exactly. The British Grammar also speaks of the mode which Murray names Subjunctive. The Progressive mode is also described as a form of speech; the term Potential is also used; and the definition of a verb, and its subdivisions, are the same as Murray's. This is not all. The grammar contains numerous exercises in false syntax, like those published by Murray, so that really there seems to be nothing left on which Mr. Murray can lay any claim to originality.

The author of the British Grammar maintains that every *Mode*, "in every language whatsoever," may be found in English, and he speaks of the Precative, the Vocative, the Assertive or Annunciative, &c. His error lay in supposing that, because we could express the ideas of other languages, we had their forms. A *mode* is a particular variation of meaning produced by altering some single word, which has been called the *root*; but, as we have but the two variations that mark the present and imperfect tenses, we have no modes, and but two tenses. It is remarkable that the author allows but one *case*, because nouns have but one change of termination; and yet he is ready to allow an indefinite number of modes and tenses, though, by his own rule, he can make but *one*; for, if he does not allow the nominatives and objectives to be cases, because they are only the noun unchanged, he should not allow the *present* to be a tense, because it is only the verb unchanged! We have dwelt more particularly upon this grammar, because we suppose Murray's to be a mere revision of it, and we wish to lay the blame of perverting the true grammar of our simple language upon the right shoulders. Murray honestly calls his grammar a mere compilation, but in his acknowledgments, he does not mention the British Grammar.

The next grammar mentioned by our correspondent is Dr. Priestley's, 1762. This learned author allows no modes and but two tenses. He asserts, as Dr. Wallis did, that, in our language, we have no more business with a future tense, than we have with the whole system of Latin Modes and Tenses.

In 1763, Dr. Lowth published a compendious grammar, intended, as he said, "merely for a private and domestic use," that is, to help some young member of his family to such a knowledge of English Grammar, as would prepare him to enter upon the Latin. Mr. Murray is generally supposed to have based his grammar on Dr. Lowth's, but Lowth's is evidently built on the British Grammar, and the fact is that Murray has borrowed of Lowth only his definitions, and these

do not essentially differ from those of the British Grammar. Lowth is generally supposed to have allowed but three tenses, the present, past, and future, but he also speaks of the compound tenses, and the progressive form. His subjunctive mode embraces the subjunctive and potential of Murray, and he places the Participles in the Infinitive mode, as the British Grammar does. Lowth's Grammar was early introduced into this country, and was reprinted here, as lately as 1840, for the use of Harvard University.

Dr. Johnson's Grammar, prefixed to his great Dictionary, is so incomplete as hardly to deserve notice. *Dr. Ash's* Introduction to Lowth's Grammar was a small affair. *Ward's* Grammar, 1765, we have never seen, but we are told by our correspondent, that the author "was strongly inclined to the old system of instruction, and used his influence to revive many useless terms, which had been rejected by Wallis." Of *Burn's* Grammar, 1766, we know nothing. *Buchanan's*, 1767, was mostly stolen, verbatim, from the British Grammar.

Thus far our correspondent had reached, when ill health unfortunately compelled him to desist. For the facts in the above essay we are indebted to his communications before referred to, but he must not be held answerable for the opinions or the language we have used. In our next number we shall commence our notice of some of the American manuals of English Grammar, beginning with that of Dr. Webster.

WALLIS.

APT REMARK.—Good old Roger Ascham, the instructor of the unfortunate lady Jane Gray, says: "It is a pity, that commonly more care is had, yea, and that among very wise men, to find out rather a cunning man for their horse, than a cunning man for their children. They say nay, in one word, but they do so in deed; for to one they give two hundred pounds, and to the other but two hundred shillings. God, that sitteth in heaven, laugheth their choice to scorn, and rewardeth their liberality as it should be. For he suffereth them to have tame and well-ordered horses, but wild and unfortunate children; and, therefore, in the end, they find more pleasure in their horse than comfort in their child."

WHISPERING.—"We have no whispering in our school," said a teacher, who thought he had "already attained." "Yes," said one of his pupils, who overheard the boast, "we never whisper now, we talk aloud."

THE DEAD.

"The dead alone are great!
While heavenly plants abide on earth,
The soil is one of dewless dearth;
But when they die, a mourning shower
Comes down, and makes their memories flower
With odors sweet, though late.

"The dead alone are fair!
While they are with us, strange lines play
Before our eyes, and chase away
God's light: but let them pale and die,
And swell the stores of memory,—
There is no envy there.

"The dead alone are dear!
While they are here, long shadows fall
From our own forms, and darken all;—
But when they leave us, all the shade
Is round our own sad footsteps made,
And they are bright and clear.

"The dead alone are blest!
While they are here, clouds mar the day,
And bitter snow-falls nip their May;
But when their tempest-time is done,
The light and heat of Heaven's own Sun
Glow on their land of rest."

[Henry Alford.]

NEW YORK FREE SCHOOLS.

It gives us great pleasure to learn by the following extract from an official announcement of the State Superintendent of Common Schools in New York, that the people of the State have by a large vote placed all their public schools on the same footing with those of New England. Hitherto, a portion has been paid by the State, and the taxation for the balance has been so assessed upon those who had children to be educated, that they have paid more than those who had none; and those who had many, have paid more than those who had few; those who had children, and paid no tax, having no right to use the public schools. The effort to place their schools on a free basis was begun several years ago, and has been sustained with much vigor until now, when success has crowned the attempt. The result has given great joy to those most acquainted with the state of education in that great commonwealth, and the Superintendent, who has been very active in bringing about the victory, thus announces it.

"The Superintendent of Common Schools tenders his most cordial congratulations to the people of the State, on the recent adoption of the "Act for the establishment of FREE SCHOOLS throughout the State," by a majority so strongly indicative of the popular appreciation of the great interests involved in the issue submitted. The whole number of votes cast for the new law is 249,872, and the whole number against it 91,951, showing a majority of 157,921. The unequivocal sanction thus afforded to the principle of the Universal and Free Education of the youth of the State, affords additional grounds of reliance upon the efficacy of our republican institutions, to accomplish the important objects for which they were designed, and demonstrates the entire confidence which may at all times safely be reposed in the intelligence and virtue of an enlightened community. The conviction is fully entertained by the Superintendent, that by far the larger portion even of those who felt constrained to oppose the act in question, were actuated not by hostility to the principle of Free Schools, but by considerations drawn from objections, whether well or ill founded, to the particular details of the bill upon which they were specifically called to act. These objections, it is confidently hoped and expected, may be obviated either by a more full explanation and understanding of the provisions referred to, or by future legislative action, and the united efforts of the people, thereby enabled to be put forth to sustain and carry into successful operation, the new and interesting feature thus engrafted upon our system of public instruction. To this end the Superintendent earnestly invokes the efficient co-operation of every friend of Education, in its highest and best sense, and of every citizen who has at heart the welfare and prosperity of our social, civil and religious institutions, in the important task of organizing and perfecting the details of that system which has been so emphatically decreed by the popular will."

By the new act, thus accepted, the schools are made free to all persons, residing in the State, and between the ages of five and twenty-one years. Hired persons are considered part of the family hiring them. Mere boarders in a district, for the purpose of attending the schools, are not admitted. The Trustees of the Districts are to prepare estimates to be laid before a meeting of the voters, who must be of full age; resident in the District; qualified, if aliens; owners of real estate subject to taxation, or who have been taxed within two years, or who own personal property, liable to taxation, to the amount of \$50, exclusive of property exempted from attachment. The school must be kept four months in the year, but

the Superintendent earnestly calls on the people to make ample provision for eight months. Where laws already exist in any city for the free education of youth, they are duly confirmed. We believe that Rochester and New York City have anticipated the new law, which goes immediately into operation.

We can not let this opportunity pass without expressing our fear that, in some parts of New England, where the schools have the reputation of being free, they are so managed that many children of the poor are excluded from them. This may not be intended, but it is effectually done in several ways, the most common of which is, for the inhabitants to vote a certain inadequate appropriation, and then to vote, that the school shall be kept longer than the school money and the appropriation are sufficient to pay for, and then to order the deficient funds to be assessed upon the children who attend. The consequence is that the very poor do not send their children at all, or only send a part of them. We have before called the attention of the legislature to this abuse, but nothing has yet been done to prevent it. It is bad enough for those who are able to raise a subscription and continue the school for their own children exclusively, after the time provided for by the district has expired, but it is unjust, illegal and cruel so to arrange the additional term, as not only to exclude the children of the poor, but to cut them off from that portion of the school time, which is provided for by law, and paid for in part by the State."

CRITICISM.

We have received the following, from an esteemed correspondent in New York, and, although not intended for publication, but for our private admonition, we think it may be of service to others, as well as to ourselves, to publish it entire, with a few remarks.

MR. EDITOR.—Permit me to call your attention to one or two very common grammatical errors; and, first, let me ask, is not the phrase in your last number (24) page 1, line 2 from bottom, "we hoped to *have had* the aid, &c." incorrect? Is not the use of the word *had* improper? We *hoped*, refers, of course, to some *passed* period, from which we looked *forward*, not *backward*. The only perplexity that occurs is when the word *ought* is employed. "You *ought* to have done it." But *ought* is made use of only in the *present time*. Some persons delight, it is true, in saying, "You *had ought*," but neither this nor *oughted* will pass muster yet. (Note 1.) My

second remark is on the application of *whose* to inanimate objects or to any thing but a rational being. "This house, *whose* dimensions are," &c., is a very common form of expression, so common, indeed, and, perhaps, convenient, that I do not think it likely to be supplanted by the old form, "This house, the dimensions *of which*," &c. Who is a relative pronoun referring to persons, and if we can not say, "The house whom I see, we cannot say, "The house whose dimensions." (Note 2.) I will add another instance still more prevalent, and I am afraid well nigh incurable. It is the almost total abandonment of the word *whether*, and the use, in its stead, of the little word *if*. That Frenchmen should make this mistake is not strange, for they have, in their language, only one word, *si*, to express the two ideas conveyed to our minds by the words *if* and *whether*, but that persons acquainted with Latin or German, and who have studied English Grammar, should confound these two words is singular, and yet the best writers do it. The words convey really different ideas. "Tell me *if* you are going to Boston to-morrow," means, tell me, in case you determine to go; but "Tell me *whether* you are going," means, let me know your mind about going;—are you going, or are you not going? "See *if* it rains," is a very inelegant, but very common error, in New York, at least. (Note 3.)

Note 1. We thank our friend for correcting us. The error, we suspect, is not uncommon with us, but we will try to make it so. We consider *ought* an exception to the rule, but we disagree with our friend in not allowing it any past tense. When we say, "You *ought* to go," *ought* is in the present tense; but when we say "You *ought* to have gone," we consider the obligation expressed by *ought* to the past, because it seems absurd to say, I have a present obligation to do something at a time irrevocably past. *Must* is in the same condition. "I *must* go," is present; "I *must* have gone, if he had required it," is past. The use of *had ought* is very common in this region, but, as the pluperfect tense is formed by adding a perfect participle to the auxiliary *had*, and *ought* has no participles, we hope the error will be checked before it is established by usage.

Note 2. We see no objection to the use of *whose* as the possessive of *which*, as well as of *who*, for we need it, and have the best authority for it. We have seen *whose* for the possessive of *which* in Shakspeare, but we do not recollect an instance at this moment. Milton says, "That forbidden tree *whose* mortal taste brought sin into the world;" Pope says, "The lights and shades *whose* well accorded strife," where *whose* is

plural also; and Swift says, "A critic is like a dog at a feast, whose thoughts are wholly set on what the guests fling away."

Note 3. The remarks on the improper use of *if* for *whether* are just, and should be attended to by teachers. *Whither* and *whether*, though confounded in some old works, have now become distinctly separated, but the distinction that once existed between *whither* and *where*, *thither* and *there*, is seldom regarded by modern writers or speakers.

THE READING OF SINGING.

[The following hit, which we take from the Zanesville Gazette, is too good a lesson to be lost. It will answer for New England as well as for Ohio.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,—I send you a hymn for publication, divided according to a system of singing pursued by some. It may be more convenient than if divided in the common way. A FRIEND.

1. Whenni cannread dmy title clear
To mansion zin the skies
Zile bid farewellile, bid farewellile, bid farewell to wevry fear
Rand dwipemy weeping ngeyes.
2. Should dearth thagaint tny soul lengage
Jand firery darts sbe hurld
Dthen ni can smilat, then ni can smile, then ni can smilat Satan's zrage
Jand dfaca frowning world.
3. Let cares zlikea wilde luge come
Mand storm zof sorrow fall,
Mayi but safe, mayi but safemayi but safely reach chmy home:
My God dmy heaven my yall.
4. There shalli bathemy weary soul
Lin seaz zof heavenly rest,
Tand dnot ta wavand, dnot ta wavand, dnot ta wavof trouble roll
Lacrossmy peaceful breast.

EXAGGERATION.—A radical, inveighing against the rapacity of the clergy, gave it as his decided opinion, that if they had their own way, they would raise the tithes from a tenth to a twentieth. On the other hand, an intended diminution by the same figure of speech may amount to an exaggeration. "I have just met our old acquaintance Daly," said an Irishman to his friend, "and was sorry to see he had almost shrunk away to nothing. You are thin, and I am thin, but he is thinner than both of us put together."

PUNCTUATION. NO. II.

The characters used to indicate the sense, and, incidentally, to mark the pauses, are the comma (,) semicolon (;) colon (:), period (.) dash (—) question (?) and exclamation (!) The word comma means *segment*, or *part cut off*; for, the sense of the clause, cut off by it, is never complete. Perhaps the best way, to show both the nature of the comma, and its use, will be to give a few plain rules, which seem to be established by general usage.

1. Two or more nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, participles, or adverbs, following each other, require a comma between them, if the word *and* be not there; as,

Virtue, honor are both lost.
He, she, it are of the third person.
To live, labor, die is our lot.
He spoke gently, kindly, frankly to me.

If *and* be present, no comma is needed, and this is sometimes the case if *or*, and, perhaps, other conjunctions are used. When more than two of the same part of speech are used, *and* is usually placed between the last two, without a comma; as,

Virtue, honor and character were all lost.
Our lot is to live, to labor and to die.

But if, for the sake of emphasis, *and* is placed between every word of the same class, the comma can only be omitted between the last two; as,

Virtue, and honor, and fame and life were each at stake.

When *and* is placed between clauses, the comma is not omitted, as between words, unless the clause be very short.

Short, To love God and to serve him are inseparable duties.
Long, Thou shalt love the Lord, and Him only shalt thou serve.

2. Words in pairs, connected by a conjunction, require commas between the pairs; thus,

Truth is fair and artless, simple and sincere, uniform and consistent.

3. Nouns in apposition are separated by commas; as,

John, king of England. William, my brother.

4. The name or epithet, applied to a person or thing addressed, requires a comma after it; as,

• John, I wish to speak to you.
Little girl, what is your name?
Dear sir, I have received your letter.

In the middle of a sentence, the name requires a comma, both before and after it; as,

It is good, my friends, to be afflicted.
Do not think, sir, to deceive me.

5. A phrase, that includes the case absolute and participle, requires to be separated by a comma, or commas, in the same manner; as,

Many, their health being lost, returned home.
Character being lost, all was lost.

6. A quotation requires not only the quotation marks (" ") but a comma and a capital letter; thus,

God has said, "Thou shalt reverence my Sabbaths."

7. A comma is used when a verb is omitted; as,

To err is human; to forgive, divine.
He left at noon; she, at sunset.

8. The relative must always be separated from its antecedent, if the latter be a pronoun, and generally, if it be a noun; as,

I am he, who did the deed.
This is the wretched man, who will not be advised.

Mr. Buckingham, the late editor of the Boston Courier, than whom there is no better authority in the art of punctuation, and no better model in the correct and forcible use of "Our noble English," allows, we believe, no exception to this rule.

9. The nominative and its verb, the verb and its object must not be separated, unless a distinct clause comes between them, or the nominative clause be very long; as,

The man of piety sees God in every thing.
The man, who is pious, sees God, &c.

10. The words *perhaps*, *indeed*, *however* and *therefore*, are generally separated by commas; as,

That is true, perhaps, but I can not believe it.
He said much, indeed, but nothing to the point.
I think, however, you were too hasty.
Now, therefore, let us be of one mind.

However is excepted, when it qualifies an adjective; as,

However rich he is, he cannot live forever.

Nay, *besides*, *again*, and words similarly used, at the beginning of sentences, to continue an argument, require a comma; as,

Nay, you are too severe.
Besides, he was not candid.
Again, let me exhort you, &c.

11. All clauses that are parenthetical, or that may be omitted without destroying the sentence, require commas before and after them.

This is a very comprehensive rule, and, in fact, includes some that have already been given. It, no doubt, is liable to exceptions, but the teacher will find it one of the most useful rules, and one that affords excellent examples for blackboard

exercises. For a general rule, commas may take the place of any parenthesis. The following are examples under this rule. I may say,

Virtue is, probably, I may say, certainly, better than riches.

Virtue is, probably,—certainly, better than riches.

Virtue is, probably, better than riches.

Virtue is better than riches.

Virtue, that is, true virtue, is inseparable from true religion.

It is of no use, let me tell you, sir, to be so angry.

[To be continued.]

PHONOGRAPHY.—In the British Grammar, a small Svo of about 300 pages, published nearly a hundred years ago, are the following remarks, which seem to be as applicable to our times as if they were newly written. The author in speaking of the English alphabet, says, "Our ancestors have been very sparing of vocal sounds, and lavish in introducing marks, that lead rather to silence than to produce a voice. We could have expressed our language without the assistance of the consonants *c, j, q, v, w, x, y, z*; for, we could have used *k* for hard *c*, as *kup* for *cup*, and *s* for its soft sound, as *sity* for *city*. We could have used *k* for *q*, as *kuality* for *quality*, or we might have rejected *k* and *q*, and used *c* with its hard sound only, and *s* for its soft sound. We could have used *f* for *v*, and we could have used *u* for *w*, which we borrowed from the Germans, giving it the same sound, *oo*, before a vowel. We could use *ks* for *x*, as *foks* for *fox*, and we could have used *i* for *y*, as *cipress* for *cypress*. We could also have used *i* for *j*, as formerly, short *i* being the sound that northern nations give to *j*. Finally, we could have used *s* for *z*. But, although these consonants appear to be superfluous, yet to expel them now from the alphabet would introduce such confusion and change in the orthography and analogy of words, as to leave but few traces of their etymology or origin.

But, if we have a redundancy of consonants, we, on the contrary, as well as other nations, are very deficient in characters expressive of vocal sounds. It is, indeed, greatly to be wished that we had either more characters for vowels, or marks on those we have, to distinguish their several sounds. Did no character stand sometimes for one, and sometimes for another sound; and were no sound represented sometimes by one, and sometimes by another character, the cause of false spelling, and vicious pronunciation, in the present living languages, would be entirely removed, and reading and spelling be the work of a few weeks only to a child, and but of a few days to a grown person. Some gentlemen of real learn-

ing, and particularly Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. Gill and Bishop Wilkins, offered schemes for introducing several new characters, in order to rectify and fix our orthography, which was formed by chance, in rude and illiterate ages; but the reception these schemes met with, will, I suppose, deter others from such vain attempts. The same fate would attend the invention of a new alphabet, or the introduction of a new character for every simple sound, however useful and advantageous it might prove in rendering reading and spelling easy tasks, and establishing a fixed and uniform pronunciation; for, few of any nation could be prevailed upon to learn their letters over again, or part with their books in the present character, which, by such an innovation, would become altogether useless. It remains, therefore, that we endeavor to exhibit as plain and conclusive rules for the powers and properties of the characters we now have, as the impetuous and prevailing tide of custom will permit.

TEACHERS WHO DO NOT READ.

Who would have thought it—who would have dreamed that our children are the pupils of teachers who do not read? But we must tell our story:—Our agent while canvassing Allegheny County, met with several teachers who refused to take the Magazine, and assigned no other reason than *that they did not read*. They had no time nor inclination to read after school hours. Alas! for that corner of the vineyard—alas! for those poor pupils. A teacher who does not and will not read! How can such a man teach? How can a meal chest hold out from which meal is daily taken, and none replaced? How can such teachers tell their pupils of the changes which are constantly taking place throughout the world? How can they keep pace with the improvements making in the art of teaching? How can they expect to give that variety which enlivens and cheers the school-room. A teacher who does not read, may do in a dearth; but we hope to see the day when the profession will not be disgraced by such. That man who will not exert himself to add to his stock of information, must be a self-satisfied mortal. Such a man never has taken a single drop from that inexhaustible fountain of knowledge to which he should lead his pupils, and from which, he should persuade them by all the powers of his ingenuity, to drink. No man who has tasted of this fountain can say, I am satisfied; it is so sweet, and so refreshing that he will drink on and on, looking forward to the time when he will be permitted to drink deeper and still deeper.

A teacher who does not read, forsooth! Away with such teachers; they are clogs to education, and destructive to our school system. They know nothing, and they wish to know nothing. Our money is thrown away on such pretenders.—*Pa. Teachers' Mag.*

NEW YORK COMMON SCHOOLS.—“On the first of July last, there were 11,194 organized school districts in the state, being an increase of 570 over the previous year. The number of children taught in the Common Schools was 778,309, being an increase of 2586 over the preceding year. There were also 1893 unincorporated and private schools, with 72,785 pupils. The aggregate amount of public money received by the common schools was \$846,710 45; and the sum appropriated for the payment of teachers' wages (including \$489,691 63 raised in the several districts,) was \$1,143,401 16. Under the “free school” act of the last session, approved by the people, the common schools throughout the state are to be free to all persons over five and under twenty-one years of age. The whole number of volumes in the district school libraries is 1,409,154; 70,306 volumes having been added during the year.

The whole number of pupils admitted to instruction in the State Normal School since its organization, is 1129, of whom 428 have graduated, and are nearly all engaged as common school teachers. The present number of pupils is 217.”


[What has become of the other 484, who have not graduated and are not now in the school?]

EXCERPTA CORRIGENDA.

“Had he chosen *to have remained* mum, he might have been elected.” Had he chosen *to remain*.

“He that scoffs at the crooked, *had need go* very straight himself.” *Needs to go*, or *has need to go*.

“I saw her safely seated in the Dover coach, exulting in the coming discomfiture of the vagrant donkeys, with Janet at her side.” Was Janet seated by her side, or fighting by her side?

 All Communications, Newspapers, and Periodicals, for the Journal, should be addressed to Wm. B. Fowle, Editor, West Newton.

THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL is regularly published, semi-monthly, by LEMUEL N. IDE, 138½ Washington street, up stairs, (opposite School-street,) Boston. Price, One Dollar a year, payable in advance, or \$1.25 not paid before April 1.